

the police in Northern Ireland accountable and helping people develop some confidence in a policing service that has faced credible charges of collusion in crime and assassination. In fact a poll conducted in March of last year showed that public confidence in the ombudsman's objectivity was high, with 78 percent of respondents saying they were confident that complaints were dealt with impartially.

There is now a Policing Board in Northern Ireland, composed of independent and party representatives, designed to provide civilian control and fair, nonsectarian, policing. There are district police partnerships, to guarantee that both the police and the communities they guard understand that the role of the police is to protect the community, not to impose some form of political control. The Patten Commission also envisioned a police force more representative of the whole community. Although Northern Ireland is nearly 45 percent Catholic, the old police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, RUC, was over 90 percent Protestant, and often seemed to function more as an auxiliary to loyalist paramilitaries than the upholder of law and order. Today, recruits to PSNI are supposed to be 50 percent Catholic, so that in time the police will hopefully be representative of the people they are supposed to protect. Now only 20 percent of the police force is Catholic. It's an improvement, but only a start. In the disturbing riots last fall and summer by unionists, the police vigorously enforced the law instead of standing aside as they often did before. This again is a hopeful sign.

But questions remain about "bad apples" who may still remain somewhere in the ranks of Northern Ireland's police and about Special Branch members. The U.S. Congress has long understood the importance of supporting police reform and community reconciliation in Northern Ireland. As the author of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY 2000–2001—H.R. 3427; Public Law 106–113—I have been particularly interested in training and or exchange programs conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation or other Federal law enforcement agencies for the RUC, now PSNI. In fact it was my legislation that suspended all FBI–RUC training until 2001, when President Bush certified that the human rights and vetting standards established by my legislation were implemented in the program.

In this year's State Department Authorization Bill, which I sponsored and which passed the House overwhelmingly, 351–78, I included funds to provide specialized investigative training for personnel in the office of the Police Ombudsman to ensure that policing in Northern Ireland is carried out in compliance with internationally recognized human rights standards. We also amended the authorization for the International Fund for Ireland, IFI, to provide up to \$7 million for programs that enhance relations between communities, and between the police and the communities they serve, promote human rights training for police, enhance peaceful mediation in neighborhoods of continued conflict, promote training programs to enhance the new district partnership police boards, and assist in the transition of former British military installations and prisons into sites for peaceful, community-supported activities, such as housing, retail, and commercial development. We hope the Senate will act soon on this important legislation.

The Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill—now Public Law 109–102—specifically allows the IFI to use the U.S. contribution to be used for training police to promote human rights and rule of law, and to foster improved relations between police and the communities they serve.

But one remaining area of great concern are the more than 3,000 unsolved murders between 1969 and the signing of the Good Friday agreement in 1998. Punishment of the guilty in many cases may not be possible, because of previous amnesties which have been granted to promote peace in Northern Ireland. But true peace and true democracy cannot be founded on lies and cover-ups. An integral part of police reform is investigation of police and government collusion in past criminal acts. Only the truth can guarantee that Northern Ireland's new police force is established on a sound basis of respect for law and justice, something the previous force, the RUC could never claim. Only the truth can guarantee that the people of Northern Ireland accept their police as legitimate.

The government has recently instituted the Historical Enquiries Team to investigate and resolve these cases. This has the potential—if operated with transparency and openness—to be a critical, helpful step. Time will tell. Meanwhile, there are several cases which require special attention. The British and Irish Governments in 2001 jointly appointed Judge Peter Cory, a preeminent retired justice of the Supreme Court of Canada to determine whether independent commissions should investigate possible state sponsored collusion in six notorious and horrific murders. They also pledged to abide by his recommendations. Two years ago Judge Cory issued his report and called for five of the six murders to be investigated independently. Yet the British Government has still not appointed an inquiry commission into the murder of the human rights attorney Patrick Finucane, who was gunned down in his home, in front of his wife and three small children, in 1989. Every 1 of the past 10 hearings I have chaired on human rights and police reform in Northern Ireland has dealt with Patrick Finucane's murder. Yet still nothing has been done. The Government of the UK must find a way to institute a credible inquiry which will be accepted by all, especially the Finucane family. The British Government has finally begun its inquiry commission, as demanded by Judge Cory, into police misconduct in the murder of Rosemary Nelson, another heroic human rights lawyer, and mother of three, who fell victim to a car bomb in March 1999. Rosemary, 6 months earlier had testified before my committee about the harassment, intimidation and threats made against her by the RUC. No one has ever been charged in her murder. That inquiry was finally begun on April 19 but has made little progress so far, and serious questions remain as to whether the investigation is being conducted properly. If the population of Northern Ireland is to cease relying on paramilitaries for protection, and transfer its trust to the police, it must have confidence that the police and the authorities deserve trust. These inquiries need to be done, and done well, as soon as possible.

Finally, although political reform and police reform are absolute preconditions for all progress, only economic development can finally end the terrible poverty, among both

Catholics and Protestants, nationalists and unionists, which helps breed the violence. Fully employed, prosperous and prospering people, who can see tomorrow as better than today, rarely attack their neighbors. The Catholic and nationalist community, although worried, looks on the fulfillment of the Good Friday agreements with great hope. Too many in the unionist community, unfortunately, have been exploited by extremists to look upon all gains by Catholics as setbacks for themselves, that all jobs that Catholics get, as jobs that they lose. Only economic development can provide the jobs, the housing, the public services that all the people of Northern Ireland, in both communities, need for a better life. We have continued our support—\$13.5 million in 2006—for the International Fund for Ireland for both 2006 and 2007, not only to promote police reform, as I mentioned above, but also to promote economic development which is critical to achieving a just and lasting peace. Now that we are nearer to success, this is no time to falter in our efforts.

The IFI has played a vital role in economic progress in Northern Ireland. The U.S. has contributed over half of the total fund, about \$400 million in the past 20 years. And it has helped. In the 1990's Northern Ireland's unemployment fell by 40 percent. The fund has created nearly 38,000 jobs. But the IFI does not only fund material progress, and its greatest achievements are not material: It has also developed a series of community building programs, promoting greater dialogue and understanding between Catholic and Protestant, including leadership programs designed to develop a new generation of leaders in Northern Ireland to bring about a more peaceful and prosperous future in the region. Young people are the key to the future everywhere, but in Northern Ireland they are absolutely crucial to breaking the cycle of discrimination and sectarian violence once and for all. For this reason our authorization bill continues support for "Project Children," to bring together Catholic and Protestant participants from the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, to help build peace in Northern Ireland through its children and young people.

Besides Mitchell Reiss, we heard testimony from the Right Honorable Sir Desmond Rea, chairman, Northern Ireland Policing Board; Mr. Denis Bradley, vice chairman, Northern Ireland Policing Board; Ms. Maggie Beirne, director, Committee for the Administration of Justice; Ms. Jane Winter, director, British Irish Rights Watch; Ms. Archana Pyati, senior associate, Human Rights Defenders Program, Human Rights First.

TRIBUTE TO MR. FRANKLIN E.
FORD

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Franklin "Frank" Ford recognizing his recently revealed contributions to the U.S.-led allied victory in World War II as designer and superintendent for The Dow Chemical Company's ethylene plant.

During World War II, Imperial Japan blocked shipments of natural rubber to the U.S. As necessity is the mother of invention, the U.S.

was forced to develop synthetic rubber to relieve the U.S. military of its dependence on imported rubber.

Mr. Ford and a team of dedicated engineers at The Dow Chemical Company in Midland, Michigan, developed and pioneered domestic ethylene production, which as the precursor to synthetic rubber, was used to supply the U.S. with critical resources necessary to win the war. Ethylene continues to have practical, widespread applications today in plastic bags, paints, antifreeze and car components.

Until recently Mr. Ford's family was unaware of his impact on Dow and his important role in developing ethylene. He is being honored today at the Herbert D. Doan Historical Museum in Midland and finally getting the recognition he and others deserve.

Like so many in Mr. Ford's generation, he never asked for any credit, recognition or accolades for his work or the work of his team during the war. He did not ask for a blue ribbon or a tickertape parade. He is among the many anonymous Americans who quietly, selflessly did his job on the home front to win the war overseas.

That is why more than 60 years after World War II it is a privilege for me to publicly recognize Mr. Ford and his team at The Dow Chemical Company as unsung heroes and acknowledge their contributions to the U.S. during a time of world war.

WELL DONE!—ATLANTA GAS LIGHT

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on February 16th of this year, Atlanta Gas Light celebrated 150 years of quality and continued service to the people of Georgia. What a privilege it is to take this opportunity to thank Atlanta Gas Light for being a leader in innovation and economic development.

Natural gas is a cornerstone of the energy supply for Georgia residents and businesses. From cooking food and heating our homes to lighting our streets, natural gas has helped make Atlanta the commercial leader of the Southeast.

Atlanta Gas Light has become a community leader as well volunteering time and money and giving back to the citizens of Georgia. In addition to their own accomplishments, Atlanta Gas Light recognizes other community leaders in Georgia with its Shining Light Award. Since 1963, recipients of the Shining Light Award have been recognized by gas lamps erected throughout the city in their honor. This is just one of the many ways Atlanta Gas Light continues to give back to the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia.

I applaud Atlanta Gas Light on their first 150 years as a business and community leader. Without a doubt, their continued leadership will help Atlanta grow and remain the center of the Southeast for the 21st Century.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, due to inclement weather, I was unable to vote during the following rollcall vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as indicated below.

Rollcall No. 68: yea.

MONITORING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on March 16, 2006, I chaired a hearing to review the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005 and, in the context of those reports, to examine the state of respect for human rights around the world.

Human rights are not a concession or benefit conferred by the state. They are the entitlement of every human person on the basis of that person's inherent dignity and worth. Thus the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and subsequent international human rights treaties did not establish human rights—they recognized those rights. Therefore, human rights cannot be abrogated or otherwise removed by any government. They are entitlements pre-existing and superseding the prerogatives of the government, and as such are either respected or violated.

Certain human rights are fundamental, and are the basis for the recognition and enjoyment of all other human rights. Foremost of these rights is the right to life. If a human being is denied or threatened with the denial of life, the existence of other rights is meaningless. And attempts to exclude any category of human beings from the inviolable right to life at the whim of expediency or the more powerful undermines and threatens the respect of life for all peoples. A determination to take the life of one human being easily translates into taking the life of another, limited only by the relative power of the aggressor and the vulnerability of the one whose life is threatened. It is for these reasons that the life of every human being, from conception to natural death, is of such critical, overriding importance.

As affirmed by the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, liberty, justice and peace in the world are built on the foundation of the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. Human rights are central to United States foreign policy not only because they are a moral imperative but also because they are central to any effort to establish and maintain a democratic, peaceful, stable society. Those who ignore or repudiate human rights are sowing the seeds of instability, rebellion and violence.

It is therefore disturbing that human rights concerns are often subordinated to other concerns, such as trade, cooperation on terrorism, immigration control, or selling military equip-

ment, in the name of maintaining relations with countries of high importance to U.S. strategic goals. This misses the point. The most important U.S. interest is the promotion of freedom and democracy and long-term stability. We are strong enough, and we are prosperous enough that we have no need to accept blood money or to send refugees back to persecution or to seek our alliances among regimes that murder and torture their own people.

The Country Reports are among the most important tasks undertaken by the Department of State. These reports allow the United States an opportunity to bear witness, to reassert fundamental principles, and also to examine its own conscience about whether its foreign policy comports with these principles. Other annual reports, such as the Trafficking in Persons report and the report on International Religious Freedom, also shine the spotlight on specific human rights areas which bear closer examination.

Although the human rights mechanism of the United Nations is not directly germane to the release of the Country Reports, the importance of the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution establishing the new Human Rights Council is of such importance that I included it in the discussions of the hearing. I personally am deeply disappointed and dismayed that the United Nations adopted such a weak and deeply flawed replacement for the discredited Human Rights Commission.

Furthermore, the new Council's anticipated promotion of the goals and commitments "emanating" from UN conferences and summits, measures not intended by negotiating member states to be on a par with human rights treaties, will dilute and trivialize the solemn importance rightly attributed to fundamental human rights. Many of us in Congress will be watching the development of the new Council closely, and we strongly encourage the Administration to work assiduously to not only ensure that this new council promotes and defends human rights but also that it does not distort the established and accepted framework of fundamental human rights.

The 2005 Country Reports document several important steps forward taken by governments around the world to respect and protect the fundamental human rights of their citizens. Burundi concluded a four-year transitional process and large numbers of displaced persons were encouraged to return home. The election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia marked "a significant milestone" in that country's efforts to achieve democracy and peace. Afghanistan experienced its first parliamentary elections in almost 30 years, with women enthusiastically participating. And in Ukraine, the Orange Revolution resulted in a democratically elected government and a notable improvement in respect for human rights.

Unfortunately, the news is not all good. The Country Reports also serve to confirm and document what we knew already, that the last year has not been a good one for the state of human rights in the world. The Zimbabwean government's Operation Restore Order led to the demolition of houses and businesses and displaced or destroyed the livelihoods of more than 700,000 people. The government of Belarus President Lukashenko detained, fined, and imprisoned pro-democracy activists, including opposition politicians, students and newspaper editors, for criticizing him and his